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THE Ax laid to the Root :

O R,

One BLOW more at the Foundation of
Infant Baptism, and *Church-Membership*.

CONTAINING

An EXPOSITION of that Metaphori-
cal Text of Holy Scripture, *MAT. 3. 10.*

Being the Substance of Two SERMONS lately
Preached, with some Additions.

Wherein is shewed

That God made a Two-fold Covenant with *Abraham*, and
that Circumcision appertained not to the Covenant of
Grace, but to the Legal and External Covenant God
made with *Abraham's* Natural Seed, as such.

TOGETHER

With an ANSWER to Mr. *John Flavel's* last Grand
Arguments in his *Vindiciarum Vindex*, in his Last Reply to
Mr. *Philip Cary*. Also to Mr. *Rothwell's Pado-Baptismus vindicatur*;
as to what seems most material.

PART I.

By *BENJAMIN KEACH*, Pastor of a Church of
Christ, meeting at *Horsly-down*, *Southwark*.

Rom. 9. 7. *Neither because they are the Seed of Abraham, are they all Children, &c.* — ver. 8. *That is, they which are the children of the Flesh, these are not the children of God.*

Gal. 4. 24. *Which things are an Allegory, for these are the two Covenants.*

Gal. 3. 29. *And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's Seed.*

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THE

Epistle to the Reader.

WHEN I first entered on this Text, I did not intend the Publication of the Sermons; it was not at all in my Thoughts: But after I had preached Two of them, I was earnestly solicited by divers, to do it; which, at last, I consented to do. Yet, because some of the Arguments about that Two-fold Covenant God made with Abraham, being before Publish'd, in my Answer to Mr. Burkit, I was at a stand in my Mind about it: Yet meeting with Mr. John Flavell's Vindiciarum Vindex, being (as he says) a full Answer to Mr. Philip Cary's Exceptions to his Vindicix legis & Fædoris, together with a late Treatise, wrote by Mr. Rothwell, called, Pædo-Baptismus Vindicatus, I was resolv'd (if the Bookseller would take the Copy) to expose it to publick view, finding no Person taking any notice of either of those late Treatises, by way of Answer. The former being so much cry'd up, as a weighty Piece, I thought it was necessary to Examine and Detect the seeming Force of his chief Arguments; for tho' the Author is deceased, yet I fear his Writings on that Subject, may do some wrong to the Truth, by hindering such gracious Persons reception of it, who are willing to be inform'd, because he was a Man of great Parts, Learning, and (I judge) of Piety: For, by sad Experience, I perceive some People build their Faith and Belief of Infant Baptism, on the Credit, and great Veneration they have of the Asserters of it, saying, How should such Men be Mistaken? which is a poor Argument; and a great Reproach it is to such Persons: For their Faith, it seems, stands in the Wisdom of Men, and not in the Power of God, or certain Testimony of his holy Word—God may, Reader, for some Reasons known to himself, hide this and some Truths, from some of his faithful Servants, may be, as a Rebuke to them for their over-valuing of humane Learning, and to the People too upon the like account; though the Knowledge of the Tongues I esteem in its place, and could wish, if the Lord saw it good, all Gospel Ministers had the Knowledge of the Original Languages; but, (as the Apostle says) God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise, 1 Cor. i. 27. And base things, and things that are despised hath God chosen, yea, things that are not to bring to naught things that are, ver. 28. That no Flesh should Glory

The Epistle Dedicatory.

in his Presence, God makes use of Men that are of no account, in the esteem of the Learned World, to confound such who are of great Repute. The Truth is, that great Author hath not missed the Mark, only in asserting Pædo-Baptism, and in his dark Notions, about the Covenant of Circumcision, but also in a Point of far greater Moment, viz. In asserting in this very Book, the Conditionality of the Covenant of Grace: These are his Words, 'An antecedent Condition, signifying no more than an Act of ours, which, tho' it be neither perfect in every Degree, nor in the least meritorious of the Benefit conferr'd, nor performed in our own natural Strength; yet, according to the Constitution of the Covenant, is required of us, in order to the Blessings consequent thereupon, by virtue of the Promise; and consequently, the Benefits and Mercies, granted in the Promise, in this order, are, and must be suspended by the Donor, or Disposer of them, until it be performed: such a Condition, we affirm Faith to be, &c.

This grand Error (for so I must call it) the Learned and Reverend Mr. Chauncy (whom God hath graciously raised up to defend his blessed Truth, at this present time, and for whose Labours we have great cause to Praise the holy Name of Jehovah) takes notice of, in his late Treatise, which is newly come to my Hand, before I wrote this Epistle, tho' my Copy is at the Press, p. 128, 129.

'Mr. Flavel (saith he) was a worthy Man, but it may be, not without some Hay and Stubble: I wish it do not prove an attempting at another Foundation, besides Christ, &c. You tell us (saith he) what an Antecedent Condition is, That it signifies no more than an Act of ours, and such is Faith. I suppose you and he mean, in distinction from a consequent Condition, the Antecedent gains the Estate, the Lawyers reckon it the Purchase-Money; the Consequent Condition keeps it, and it's the Quit-rent; which, if it be not duly paid, the Lord can enter and take the Estate; so that Faith you'll have, to be the Antecedent Money, deposited and laid down, before you have any of your Spiritual Estate; and you say, it signifies no more than an Act of ours. I pray, Whose should it be but ours? if the Condition be to be performed by us; and, Why is this put in? it signifies no more, unless the meaning be, that Christ's Righteousness should be shut out, and is should be reckoned, under the Nature of this Condition, merely as an Act of ours, without Respect to Christ, the Author of it, and Christ the true Object of it:— See him at large. ——— Again (he saith) 'Every fædoral Condition is Ex pacto Meritorious, so that you may challenge your Bargain upon Performance, if it be but 20 Guineys to purchase an 100 l. per Annum, so that we have only your Word for't, that it is not meritorious, when it's so in reality: the nature of the thing speaks it to the understanding of all Men of Sense. No, no, do not think to wheedle Christ out of his Merits, and God out of the Honour of his Free Grace, and us, out of the Comfort of both: You say, it's not performed in our natural Strength: No; and yet a Condition of a Covenant made with Man: a most unreasonable Thing, to require a Condition of a Covenant of one, that we know hath no Strength to perform it. If a Rich Man should offer an Estate of 1000 l. a Year to a poor Man, that he knew was not worth a Groat, provided he fetched him 20 l. of his own Money, this Act would be reckoned a mocking, and ridicu-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

ling this poor Wretch. God did not require that small Condition of Adam, but that he should be able to perform it; you will say, God will give him ability to perform: So he did to Adam, previous to the Covenant, &c. See his farther Answer, p. 130. God will, in due time, bring down and abase the Pride of Man; O what a Doctrine do some Men preach! 'tis time, indeed, now to lay aside our lesser Differences, and make Head against such capital Errors. The Foundation seems now to be struck at —

Reader, since I preached these Sermons, I met with Reverend Mr. Cotton on the Covenant, who confirms the same thing, concerning the Ax being laid to the Root of the Trees, Speaking of that Text, Mal. 4. 1. The Day cometh that shall leave them neither Root nor Branch: There are two Things in the Root, (saith he)

1st. 'The First is the Root of Abraham's Covenant, which this People much trusted upon, and that is it of which John the Baptist speaks, Now is the Ax is laid to the Root of the Trees, &c. This is spoken in Mat. 3. 9. after he had said, Think not to say within your selves, we have Abraham to our Father, ver. 8. So that all their Confidence they had in Abraham's Covenant, Temple, and Tabernacle, and such Things, is burnt up, and so they have no Root left them to stand upon: But,

2dly, 'There is something more in it; for, with this Spirit of burning, the Lord, by the Power of this Spirit, doth cut us off from any Power of our own natural or spiritual Gifts, whereby we thought to lay hold on Jesus Christ, and we are cut off hereby from all Confidence that we have in our own sufficiency, &c. For there is an usual Confidence that we have in our own state, tho' the Lord hath cut us off from the righteousness of our Parents, and from boasting of his Ordinance; yet we think there is some Power left in us. Cotton's Treaty of the Cro. p. 177, 178. Again he saith, It is spoken of the Ministry of John the Baptist, which did burn as an Oven, and left them neither the Root of Abraham's Covenant, nor the Branches of their own good Works. He cutteth them off from the Covenant of Abraham; and so by cutting them off from the Root, he leaveth them no ground to trust to, Pag. 21, 22.

I hope, if this Text be well considered, and our Arguments, in the ensuing Treatise, no wise and impartial Person will find there is any ground for Men to plead for Infant Baptism, from the Covenant God made with Abraham. I shall say no more, but leave what I have said to the Blessing of the God of Truth (who is coming forth to shake all false Foundations and States; yea, both Heaven and Earth, that that which cannot be shaken, may remain) and rest thy Servant in the work of the Gospel,

*From my House near
Horsly-down, South-
mark, this 6th. of
March, 1693.*

BENJAMIN KEACH.

Reader, My Answer to Mr. Flavel and Mr. Rothwell, I find will not come into the first Part; but the Second is going to the Press, where you will have it.

T H E
Ax laid to the Root, &c.
 O R,
 One B L O W more at the Foundation of
Infant Baptism, and Church-Membership.

M A T. III. 10.

And now also the Ax is laid to the Root of the Trees, every Tree therefore that bringeth not forth good Fruit; is hewn down and cast into the Fire.

THIS Text is metaphorical; there is no great difference between a Metaphor and an express Similitude; and for the better understanding the Mind of God therein, I shall

1. Open the Scope and Coherence thereof.
2. Explain the Parts and Terms therein contained.
3. I shall observe some Points of Doctrine reducable there-from.
4. Shall improve the Whole by way of Application.

First, From the Scope and Coherence of the Place, 'tis evident, that *John Baptist* endeavours to take off the Jews, particularly the *Pharisees* and *Sadduces*, from the external and legal Covenant God made with *Abraham* and his *Fleshly-seed*, or *Off-spring*. See *vers. 7*. But when he saw many of the *Pharisees* and *Sadduces* come to his *Baptism*, he said unto them, O generation of *Vipers*, who hath warned you to flee from the *Wrath* to come.

Historians tell us, That there were Three more eminent Religious *Sects* amongst the Jews, the First were called *Essenes*, of whom we do not read in the Holy Scripture ; their main Doctrine was Fate ; they (*say our Annotators*) ascribed all Things to it. Secondly, The *Sadduces* were directly opposite to the *Essenes*, they ascribed nothing to Fate, but asserted the Liberty and Power of Man's Will, in the most largest Sense, or in the extravagant Height ; they denied the Immortality of the Soul of Man, the Resurrection, Angels, &c. All which, the *Pharisees* owned. See *Act. 23. 8.*

The *Pharisees*, were outwardly a very Zealous sort of People ; and, tho' they were tainted with that false Opinion of the Freedom of Man's Will to do Good, yet they ascribed much to the Providence and Grace of God ; they were Interpreters of the Law, and separated themselves from others ; they spent much time in Fasting and Prayer : 1. They held, nevertheless, a Righteousness by the Works of the Law, by which they thought they were justified and accepted of God, and so stumbled at the *Stumbling-Stone*, *Rom. 9. 32.* 2. They gave a very corrupt Interpretation of the Law. 3. They held many un-written Traditions of equal force with the Law of God ; by which means, they made void the Commandments of God. 4. They were a mere Hypocritical sort of Men in their Practices, being very strict and zealous for the smaller Matters of the Law, and neglected the weightier Things thereof.

Whether these *Pharisees* and *Sadduces* came with an intention to be Baptized, or only out of Curiosity, is hard to be resolved, since 'tis said, *They rejected the Counsel of God against themselves, being not Baptized by John.*

John however, sharply treats them both, calling them a *Generation of Vipers*, a sort of Serpents, of whom 'tis said, they make way into the World through the Bowels of their Dam. It may be upon this Account, he gave them that Name, or so called them, who thought through the Bowels (as I may so say of their Ancestors) or being the Seed of *Abraham*, or the Offspring of Godly Progenitours, to come to Heaven ; *who hath warned you to flee from the Wrath to come.* What is the Reason that you come to my Baptism ? Whereas some of you think there is no Resurrection, no Heaven, no Hell, no Angels, nor no Spirits ; or, you, who think you are so Righteous, as you need no Repentance, and so need fear no wrath to come, From whence comes this to pass that you seem to fear, or to be afraid of future Wrath, and the Vengeance of an angry God ? *Bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Repentance,* ver. 8.

O come now and put your selves among the crowd of Poor Sinners, and Godly Penitent Persons ; Repent of your false Doctrines you have taught ; Repent of the corrupt and wicked Notions and Opinions you hold, and of the Vain and Hypocritical Lives you have led, and think not that a bare Profession of this will do neither ; for you must bring forth Fruits of true Repentance, Fruits of true Holiness, from a thorough change of Heart that must be wrought in you.

But,

But, (as if he should say) I know your Thoughts, I have heard what a Belief you are of, you think you are in Covenant with God, and so are *fædorally Holy*, and in a saved and safe Condition, because you have *Abraham* to your Father, you conclude, that Covenant God made with *Abraham*, and his natural or fleshly Seed, was the Covenant of Grace; and to the Promise is sure to you: And therefore, he adds, *ver. 7. And think not to say within your selves, we have Abraham to our Father: For I say unto you, that God is able of these Stones, to raise up Children to Abraham.*

You promise good to your selves, because you are the natural Off-spring of believing *Abraham*, you rest upon your Descent from him. The very same Plea we find they made to our blessed Saviour, *Joh. 8. 33. We be Abraham's seed, and were never in Bondage to any Man. How sayest thou, yet shall be made Free: We were never under the Bondage of Sin, as others are; that Covenant made with Abraham being the Covenant of Grace, we are thereby set at Liberty, and no Man shall by his Doctrine make us believe the contrary, we are a free People, in respect of our Souls and spiritual Privileges, (for they could not mean otherwise, because they had often been in Bondage to Men, in respect of external Liberty and Freedom: First to Pharaoh King of Egypt, and then to Nebuchadnezzar, and now were so in Bondage under the Romans) I know (saith our Saviour) that ye are Abraham's Seed, according to the Flesh: They were his Off-spring; but that was no spiritual Advantage to them, tho' it did give them Right to legal Privileges and Ordinances under the Law, yet it signify'd nothing now, it would not profit them under the Gospel Dispensation, they must be the spiritual Seed of Abraham, and do the Works of Abraham, and walk in his Steps; which they did not, and therefore the Lord Jesus told them, *verf. 44. Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father you will do.**

John Baptist, intimates the same thing, when he called them a Generation of Vipers; tho' they intituled themselves to the Covenant of Grace, (like as some do now a-days) upon that, in *Gen. 17.* extended to *Abraham's* Seed, as well as to himself, and concluded, they were Members of God's Church, then on Earth, and could not therefore be deny'd any Privilege, or Ordinance, that of Right belonged to Covenant Children: But this great Prophet knew how blind and deceived they were, not understanding, that there were two Covenants made with *Abraham*, and also a Two-fold Seed (*viz.*) a Carnal or Natural, and a Spiritual Seed: they thought that Promise of God, made with *Abraham*, must be made of none Effect, if they should not be owned or allowed to be the Seed of *Abraham*; but, (saith the Baptists) God is able of these Stones, to raise up Children to *Abraham*. If he should turn Stones into Men and Women, who have *Abraham's* Faith, they would be certainly the true Seed of *Abraham*, and not such as they were, tho' they naturally proceeded from his Loins, according to the Flesh; or, God could of the Gentiles raise up Children to

Abraham, and so make good his Promise to him, who said, In thy seed, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

And now farther to convince them, and so to take away, for ever, all their Hope and Pretences of Right to Gospel-Ordinances, and Church-Membership, by vertue of the Covenant made with *Abraham*; or, from the Consideration of their being his natural or fleshly Seed; he in the words I first read to you, says, *And now also the Ax is laid to the Root of the Trees, therefore every Tree which bringeth forth not good Fruit, is hewn down and cast into the Fire, vers. 10.*

Now, this *now* refers to the time here in this Place, sometimes it refers to the Matter or Occasion of what is spoken, *Now the Ax is laid to the Root of the Trees*; whatever is meant by the Root of the Trees, this is certain, the Ax was not till now, or until this time so laid, or thus laid to the Root: We cannot understand what the Holy Ghost intends hereby, unless we observe, and well consider the Scope and Coherence of the Text, which do's clearly unfold the whole drift and purport of the *Baptists*. He shew'd them before in the Context, that their Plea to Gospel Baptism, was not good nor pleadable, *i. e.* We are *Abraham's* Seed; they might Object, and say,

Obj. All the seed of Abraham, were taken into covenant with God, and all that sprang from his loins, were members of the visible Church; and had right to the external rites, ordinances and privileges thereof.

Ans. This *John Baptist* seems to grant, *i. e.* That it was so from *Abraham's* Time untill these Days, or under the Law or old Covenant-Dispensation; they had, he denies not, a Right to Jewish Church-Membership, and Legal Ordinances: But what of that, *Now the Ax is laid to the Root of the Trees*; that is, as *Abraham* was the Root, or common Covenanting-Father, as concerning the Flesh, out of which Root, all the Jews, his natural Off-spring, sprang; and, upon which Foundation, they and their natural Church-State was founded: Yet, now the Ax is laid to this Root, *i. e.* To this Covenant, *i. e.* The legal, or external Covenant made with *Abraham*; and down must the Building fall, when the Foundation is removed; down goes the Trees, when the Root (out of which they grew) is cut down. So much as to the Scope and Coherence of the Words.

Secondly, I shall explain the Terms and Parts of the Text:

1. *Shew farther what is meant by the Root.*
2. *What is intended by the Trees.*
3. *What is meant by the Ax.*
4. *What by laying the Ax to the Root of the Trees, and by cutting down.*
5. *What by the Fire, and casting into the Fire.*

First, By the Root is meant, that which bears up the Branches, and on which the Tree and Branches stand and grow; and 'tis from hence, from his Allusion, the Baptists makes use of these Words and Expressions. Now

the Root, whereof he speaks, (as I conceive) was that Covenant God made with *Abraham*, and his natural Seed, or Off-spring; which Covenant did, in a mystical Sence, as clearly bear up the National Church of *Israel*, and all the Trees; *i. e.* Members or Branches thereof, as a common natural Root doth the Tree, or Trees that grow out of it.

2. And as by *Root* may be meant that Covenant made with *Abraham*, and his natural Seed, (from whence the National Policy, and Church of the Jews sprang, and was born up, and from whence it grew and was to abide) untill the Gospel Dispensation came in, and was established; so also by the *Root* may be intended the Foundation of all their Hopes, Confidence, and outward Privileges: For that, they (I mean the natural Off-spring of *Abraham*) had great Confidence in the Flesh, by means of that legal or external Ministration they were under, cannot be denied, and had many outward Rights and Privileges also, above all People then in the World; and if so, (I mean if this be granted, which I am sure cannot be denied) then it follows there was some *Root*, Ground, or Foundation, which they had, and upon which they built, and laid Claim to those outward Ecclesiastical and Civil Rights and Privileges; and that the Ground *Root*, or Foundation of all this, was that Covenant God made with *Abraham* and his natural Seed, is apparent to all who are not willingly Blind; for before those Covenant-Transactions with *Abraham*, we read not that the People, from whom *Abraham* sprang, had any such Rights or Privileges granted to them, and what outward Privileges God promised them afterwards by *Moses*, 'tis signify'd in divers Places to be upon the Account of the Covenant made with *Abraham*, &c. And according to the exact Time, told by the Lord to *Abraham*, God brought his natural Seed out of the Land of *Egypt*.

This, from the Scope and Coherence of the Words, therefore I must affirm, is Primarily, and Chiefly intended by the *Root* of the Trees in this Place: But,

Thirdly, By *Root*, in a more remote Sence, may be meant the state and standing of every Ungodly, Unbelieving and Impenitent Person; let their Hopes, Expectation, and Confidence, be what it will, if he be not a good Tree, a Believing and True penitent Person, his *Root*, or Foundation on which he builds, let it be what it will, cannot secure him, for down he must go with all his vain Hopes, Works, Expectation and Confidence: whatsoever with him, *For now is the Ax laid to the Root of the Trees.*

Secondly, By *Trees* are meant Men and Women, but chiefly the Seed of the Stock of *Abraham*, according to the Flesh; of whom the National Church of the Jews was made up, and did consist; as also, all wicked and unbelieving Persons whatsoever, who embrace not the Offers of Grace, in the Gospel, or believe not in Jesus Christ. For, as the Church of God is compared to a good Tree, and godly Men, in particular, are called good Trees, so is the adulterated Church of the

Jews, compared to an evil Tree; and wicked and ungodly Persons, called, *Evil and corrupt Trees*: Yet it might be here noted, that they are in this Place compared to *Fruit Trees*, tho' to such that bring not forth good Fruit, as (by the Prophet) the *Jewish Church* is compared to a *Vine*, and an *Olive Tree*, tho' she brought forth sowre Grapes, *Iſa. 5.*

Thirdly, As to the *Ax*, we all know an *Ax* is that Instrument used by Men to cut down Trees, at the Pleasure, or for the Profit of the Owner thereof; by the *Ax* here, may be intended divers Things, by which God may be said to cut down impenitent Sinners, or unfruitful Churches, or Bodies and Souls of Men. For cutting down may refer,

1. *To the Souls of Men, &c.*
2. *To their outward Rights and Privileges.*
3. *To their Bodies and Souls both.*
4. *To their external, fleshy and corrupt Church State.*

First, To the Souls of Sinners, which is done by an Act of God's Justice, when he cuts them off, from profiting by the means of Grace, giving them up to unbelief and hardness of Heart: And thus he in Judgment dealt with the Jews.

2. By giving them up to blindness of Mind, when they have Ears, and hear not; Eyes, and see not; Hearts, and understand not; God utterly leaving them to a seared Conscience, or gives them up to their own Heart's Lusts, and to walk in their own Counsel. Then they, in respect of their Souls, may be said to be cut down in Wrath for ever.

3. Or, when he takes away the Kingdom of God from them, *i. e.* The Dispensation of the Gospel. *Therefore shall the Kingdom of Heaven be taken from you, and given to another People, &c.*

Secondly, It may refer to the cutting down their Religious and Civil Rights, and Privileges.

1. When God takes away all the external and spiritual Immunities, Blessings and Favours, a People once enjoy'd.

No Gospel more preached to them, no Ministers to preach it, the Hedge of Protection and Preservation pluck'd up, and ravenous Beasts let in to devour them; like as God threatned the National Church of *Israel*, *Iſa. 5.* The Sun to shine upon them no more, nor the Clouds to rain upon them. This is a dismal cutting down.

Thirdly, Their Bodies left to be destroyed by merciless Enemies, or cut down by Famine, or Pestilence, as this very People were dealt with, when God brought in the *Romans* upon them, and their Souls cut off for their final Unbelief and Impenitency.

Fourthly, It may refer to the cutting down of their Church-State, Sacrifices, Priest-hood, Sabbaths, Temples, and all taken away and overthrown, and another People, another Seed, and more spiritual Church, constituted and established in the room thereof. And thus God dealt with

this People, *i. e.* the Church of the Jews also, they were broken off, or cut down, and the Gentiles were *grafted* in, as the Apostle shews at large, *Rom. II.*

The *Ax*, by which they are cut down, may be,

First, The Dispensation of God's Providence, or Time; Time is pictured with a *Sythe*; but then Man is compared to Grass, but it may be pictured with an *Ax*, since Men are compared to Trees; a *Sythe* is no fit Instrument to cut down Trees: Men, as you have heard, are here compared to Trees, and when once the Time's set for the Jewish Church to stand, or abide in the World, was expired, Time, or the Dispensation of God's Providence, like an *Ax*, cut it down for ever; and so will the prefix'd Time appointed by the Lord, when 'tis come, even cut down at the Root, *the bloody Idolatrous Church of Rome*, when the *Beasts* 1260 years are expired, down she shall go with Vengeance; and unless Time lays The *Ax* at her Root, and at the Root of all other Corrupt and National Churches, there will be no cutting them down, nor will there be any, then able to save her or them: the standing of all Humane and Ecclesiastical States and Constitutions, are determined by the Almighty, who works all Things according to the Counsel of his own Will.

2. The *Ax* also may refer to the Gospel: The Word of God is an *Ax* to *hew* and *square* some Persons for God's spiritual Building, and to cut down others also, as Trees that are Rotten, and bear no good Fruit, *Therefore* (saith the Lord) *I have hewn them by the Prophets*; and what follows, mark it, *I have slain them by the words of my Mouth, Hos. 6, 5.* The Word of God either kills or cures; 'tis either a *saviour of Life unto Life, or the saviour of Death unto Death, 2. Cor. 2: 16.* Like as Sweet-Meats are to some Pleasant and Comfortable, and to others Pernicious and Deadly.

The Abuse of Gospel Grace cut the Jews down, and so it will all others who slight and contemn it; the Word either softens, or hardens, like as the Sun, who shining on the Wax, it softens that; but shining on the Clay, it hardens that. When the Word comes in Judgment, then 'tis like an *Ax* in the Hand of God's Justice. I find one Learned Man speaking thus on this Place, *viz.* 'The Word of God, which is a spiritual *Ax*, cutteth down spiritually Wicked Men, and Hypocrites, like rotten and barren Trees. This is it, which is elsewhere meant by plucking up, destroying, hardening, &c. Some, (saith he) expound this, not of spiritual Judgments, threatened in his Word against impenitent Sinners, but of the Power of the Romans, which were the Instruments of God, to destroy utterly the unfaithful and wicked Generation of the Jews. The former is (saith he) the best Exposition, but I conceive it may refer to both.

3. The *Ax* may refer to Men, whom God makes use of, as Instruments in his Hand, to cut down and destroy a Wicked and God-provoking People: Hence wicked Rulers and Kings, whom God raises up as Instru-

ments in his Hand, to chastise and cut down a rebellious People, are called His Sword, and the Rod of his Wrath and Indignation, *Psal. 17. 14. Arise, O Lord, disappoint him, cast him down, deliver my Soul from the wicked, which is thy Sword.* And thus the Assyrian were an Ax in God's Hand, to use, as he pleased, and the Romans afterwards, to the Jews likewise.

Moreover, God's Israel is called his Ax, *Thou art my Batel-Ax, and Weapons of War; with thee I will break in pieces the Nations, and with thee will I destroy Kingdoms.* God's People, in the last Days, which are now very near, shall be his Ax, by whom, as Instruments in his Hand, he will destroy Babylon, *Jer. 51. 20, 24. And I will render unto Babylon, &c. all the evil they have done to Sion, in your sight, saith the Lord. Reward her as she hath rewarded you, double to her double. Rev. 18. 6. Give her Blood to drink, for she is worthy.* The Stone cut out of the Mountains without Hands, shall break to pieces all the Powers of the Earth, that oppose Christ's Kingdom, or, that stand in the way of its Establishment, *Dan. 2. 34. 44.*

4. By the Ax, may in the general be meant God's Wrath, however it is, or may be executed, or upon whom; Wrath will sooner, or later, cut down all the Ungodly, both false Churches, and tyrannical Powers of the Earth, and all who continue in Unbelief and in Rebellion against God.

The laying the Ax to the Root, discovers the final Fall and Ruin of Sinners, whether considered as a Church; or as particular Persons, dig up or cut down the Root, and down falls the Body and all the Branches of the Tree.

Fifthly, and Lastly, Therefore every Tree that bringeth not forth good Fruit, shall be hewn down and cast into the Fire. Now he draws a necessary Inference and Conclusion from the Premises.

Every Tree, that is, every Man and Woman, or every Corrupt Church, be they who they will, either Jew or Gentile, Babylonian or Christian, if not Plants of God's planting, if not Fruitful to God, if they Answer not his Design and End, if they bring not forth good Fruit, they shall be hewn down and cast into the Fire of external and eternal Wrath; a Fire saith the Lord, is kindled in my anger, and it shall burn to the lowest Hell. Wrath ceases, and shall cease on them here; but at last they shall be cast into Hell-fire, where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched, *Mark. 9. 46.*

1. The Words being thus opened and explained, I shall take notice of two or three Points of Doctrine.

1. Doct. Now the Dispensation is changed, to be of the natural Root, or of the National Church of the Jews, or the Seed of Abraham, according to the Flesh, as such is no Ground of Church-Membership; or, 'tis no Argument to be admitted into the Gospel Church, or to Gospel-Baptism.
2. Doct. Now in the times of the Gospel God is, and will be, severe with all ungodly, unbelieving and impenitent Sinners he strikes at their Root, at the Root of all their Hopes, false Faith, or fleshly Confidence whatsoever.

'Tis the first of these Propositions I shall in the first place insist upon and as I may be enabled, explain and prosecute amongst you ; but the Time being near gone, let me now with a brief word or two, conclude at this Season.

1. *Caution.* Take heed on what you build your Hopes of Justification and Salvation, what is that which bears up your Spirits : for if you are Trees that grow not out of the true root, Jesus Christ, and the Covenant of Grace ; if you have not Union with the Lord Jesus, or are not built on that Foundation, or Corner-stone God hath laid in *Sion*, down you fall ; for now *the ax is laid to the Root of the Trees.*

2. *Enquiry.* Is not *Morality* a civil and honest Life, Doing to all as you would be done unto, the Ground or Foundation of your Hopes ? Do you build upon this? if it be so, *tremble* : remember Christ saith, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* Joh. 3. 3.

If you have no other Ground of Hope, but from your own Moral Righteousness, when Death comes with his *Ax*, down you will go, and be cast into the Fire.

3. *Consider,* All you prophane and ungodly Ones, what is that which bears your Hopes up, what do you build upon ; is it not on the mere Mercy of God, or Death of Christ : God (say you) is gracious, *slow to anger*, and we therefore have Hopes, and do trust to that : Christ dyed for Sinners, &c. You say right, God is mercifull ; but what then, will you therefore presumptuously go on in ungodly and wicked Courses, oh ! know he is just as well as gracious, and will in no wise clear the guilty. *Exod. 34. 7. Except ye repent therefore, ye shall all likewise perish.* Luk. 13. 3. 5. Shall the Goodness of God, which should lead you to Repentance be thus evilly improved ; i. e. to strengthen your Hands, and encourage you to sin against him, and provoke him ? 'Tis I fear with you as Solomon speaks. *Eccl. 8. 11. Because Sentence against an evil Work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do wickedly.*

Christ 'tis true, dyed for Sinners, but you have no True Faith in him, he dyed to save Sinners from their Sins, and that they might live to him. See my Text, *now the Ax is laid to the Root of the Trees*, if you believe not on Christ, if you are not made new Creatures, *1 Cor. 5. 17. the Ax will cut you down*, and that with Vengeance, and Wrath will at last cast you into the Fire : you must learn to know the way of Salvation, and how the Mercy of God shines forth in a Mediator : Christ hath satisfied his Justice, and by him you must come to God out of Christ, *he is a consuming fire.* Abused Mercy, O Sinner ! will be turned at last into Fury ; except you obtain an Interest in Jesus Christ, you are undone ; for *the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*, Rom. 1.

3. Or are you Self-righteous Persons ? Do you build on your own Righteousness, like the *Jews* and *hypocritical Pharises* ; you, may be, think your States Good, because you are not *Swearers*, *Drunkards*, &c. may be, you

read, pray, and hear Sermons, and give to the Poor, and do much good; but if you build your Hopes of Heaven on these Things; down this *Ax* will cut you also: *Except your Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes, and Pharises, you shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, Matth. 5. 20.* nay, you must be found in the Righteousness of Christ, all ours is but *dung*, Phil. 3. 8, 9. you must in a word, *bring forth good fruit*, every Soul of you, or perish, and this you cannot do, till your Hearts are changed, and so you become good Trees: *make the tree good, and then the fruit will be good; an evil Tree cannot bring forth good fruit, &c.* all Works of unregenerate Persons, yea their Religious Duties, are but dead Works, not good fruits, nor can they bring forth good Fruits, unless they are planted by Faith into Jesus Christ: nay, I must tell you that Gospel-Holiness will not save us, it must be the Righteousness of God by Faith.

Sermon II.

M A T. III. 10.

And now also the Ax is laid to the Root of the Trees, every Tree therefore that bringeth not forth good Fruit; is hewn down and cast into the Fire.

TH E Proposition I am to prosecute, you may remember is this, considering the Context, viz. *Now the dispensation is changed to be of the natural root or the Seed of Abraham according to the flesh, is no ground for Church Membership, or no Argument to be admitted into the Gospel Church, or to Gospel Baptism.*

You say you have *Abraham* to your Father, or you are the Children of Believers, or you have believing Parents: Well, but what of this, (as if *John* should say) this will do you no good now, this will stand you now in no stead, this will give you no Right to Gospel Ordinances, nor particularly to Gospel Baptism; 'tho' it did to Circumcision, and Legal Ordinances, and Jewish Church Membership.

For

For *Hager* and her Son are cast out, that are the Old Covenant, and the Fleshly Seed; this old Root and Right, now in Gospel Days is struck at. The Ax is laid to the Roots of the Trees, *i. e.* To your old standing on the Old Covenant Root, as you are the lineal Seed of *Abraham*: The time is come now, that the Old Covenant, and Covenant Seed, are to be rooted up, the old House and Constitution pulled down; God is now about to build a new Temple, and a more spiritual House, a spiritual Temple of living Stones; and rather then he will want Materials, he can of these Stones raise up Children unto believing *Abraham*, and so make good the Covenant of Grace, or Gospel Covenant made with him: Now you must be united to a living Foundation, *i. e.* Believe in Christ, whose way I am come to prepare, and make ready fit Matter for this new Building, namely, the Gospel Church, which is not to be, by natural descent from *Abraham* as such, but only those who have the Faith of *Abraham*; yea, that Faith he had not in Circumcision, but in Uncircumcision, or before he was Circumcised. You must grow out of a spiritual Root, *i. e.* Be Married to Christ (your first Husband, *i. e.* The Law or Old Covenant is Just at the point of Death) that so ye may bring forth Fruit to God, *Rom. 7.*

4. But to proceed,

I shall prove this Proposition,

viz. That the Dispensation is now changed, to be of that natural Root or National Church of the Jews, or the Seed of Abraham, according to the Flesh, is no ground for Church Membership, no argument for admittance into the Gospel Church, or to Gospel Baptism.

1. Because 'tis positively said, that there is a change of the whole Law, *i. e.* The Levitical Priesthood, legal Ordinance, legal Church, and legal Church Membership are changed and gone: that so the better Covenant, and more spiritual Church, and Church Membership might be established; *For the Priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity, a change also of the Law. Heb. 7.*

12. 'Tis so changed, as 'tis abolished, to make way for this: (as the late Annotators observe,) the mutation of the Priesthood, indispenfably requirerh the change of the legal Covenant, which hereafter I shall prove, was not the Covenant of Grace, but is directly called the Old Covenant; the Covenant of Grace is but one, and that never changeth.

This was made necessary by the Decree of God (as they note) who determined, that both the Priesthood and Law should expire together like, (say I,) as an old Will or Testament doth, when the Testator hath made and confirmed his Last Will and Testament. ' When Christ, the Gospel High-Priest, had (saith our Annotations) in his own Person and Work, perfected all of it in Heaven, he roots out that Order of Priesthood, and demolished the Temple and City, to which he confined the Administration, and scatters the People which would cleave to it; so as all Designs and Endeavours of Jews, or of Apostate Christian to repair or restore it, hath

been ineffectual to this Day. What can be more clear, Sirs, then this? that the Old House, or Right of Church-Membership, is overturned at the very Root, for

If the Covenant, for Incovenanting the Fleishly Seed is changed or abolished, and no new Law or new Precept is given forth for the bringing them in again, What Ground is there left for any wise, seeing, and faithful Man, to Plead for Infants Church-Membership; but it is evident, the former is true, *i. e.* that Covenant, by virtue of which, they had Right to Circumcision and Church Membership; or out of which Root that *sprang* is gone, changed, and abolished for ever, and no new Law or Precept is given forth, for the bringing them into the Gospel-Church, as such. To this Text let me add another, which farther confirms it.

2. For if that first Covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second; but finding fault with them, he saith; Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and the House of Judah, Heb. 8. 7, 8.

It was not faulty in it self, but Holy, Just, and Good; it requiring perfect Righteousness of him that would be Justified, and therefore, could not give Life; the Creature being weak and unable to perform the Requirements of it; and therefore, Paul saith, What the law could not do, in that it was weak, through the flesh, God sending his own Son in likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, Rom. 8. 3.

It discovers Sin, and condemns for Sin, but could not justify the Sinner in God's sight from Sin: He that kept it not perfectly, yea continued not in doing all Things written therein, was cursed by it: He that was Circumcised, was bound to keep the whole Law that Rite obliged them, it seems to perform perfect Obedience; and yet some affirm, it was a Precept of the Gospel Covenant; but more of this by and by: But say some, Was not Circumcision a Priviledge? Did it not Profit them? The Apostle answers this Question:

For Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the Law, but if thou be a breaker of the Law, thy Circumcision is made Uncircumcision: See how the Apostle brings in Circumcision, *vers.* 23. Thou that makest thy boast of the Law, through breaking the Law, dishonourest thou God. He, it is evident, shews, That Circumcision appertained to the Law, to the Old Covenant, or Covenant of Works; for Circumcision profiteth if thou keep the Law, &c. No Profit, no Advantage by Circumcision, unless the Circumcised keep the Law; That is, (saith the late Annotations) perfectly, to which Circumcision obligeth, Gal 5. 5. Now this being so, the First Covenant being weak, and faulty, (*i. e.* through the insufficiency and weakness of the Creature, he being not able to answer its just Demands; God in his infinite Mercy sent his own Son, in our Nature and Stead, to fulfill the Righteousness thereof) he sought and found out the Second Covenant, and the First is gone, which brings me to the Third Proof of the Point.

3. *Heb. 10. 9. He took away the first, that might establish the second.* There is a First and Second Covenant, or an Old, or a New, the First must not be confounded with the Second, nor the Second with the First, because quite different in their Nature, Design and End : The First Covenant was made, 'tis true, primarily with the First *Adam*, and all Mankind in him ; that was the First Original, or Beginning of it ; and then to him it did give Life, whilst he stood by his Obedience to it ; but that Ministration of it, of which the Apostle speaks, and calls the *First Covenant*, was that which God gave to *Abraham's Seed*, according to the *Flesh*, by *Moses*, and to assure *Abraham*, that unto his Seed should be given that Law, or the *Oracles of God*, &c. he gave him the Covenant or Precept of Circumcision, *Rom. 3. 1, 2.* It served as a Pledge of the Law, and obliged them to keep it ; therefore under this old Covenant, or First Covenant, 'tis evident, came in Circumcision, and the Policy and National Church of the Jews, and all other legal and external Rights and Privileges whatsoever, both the National Church and Church-Membership ; but when the Root was struck at, *i. e.* The *First Covenant* was took away, all its Rights, Laws, Privileges and Appurtenances whatsoever, went with it ; so that now we (saith the Apostle) *know no man after the flesh, 2. Cor. 5.* That is, we prefer or esteem no Man better then others, upon the score of the First Covenant, or *Fleshly Privileges*, *i. e.* being of the *Seed of Abraham*, or of the Church of Jews, *Old things being past away, and all things being become New*, all Types, Sacrifices, Priest, and Priesthood, legal place of Worship, legal time of Worship, legal Ministers, and legal maintenance of those Ministers, the legal Church, and legal Church-Membership, were all taken away, when the Covenant was took away ; and thus the *Ax is laid to the root of the trees*, by the establishing the Gospel Dispensation, the Anti-Type being come, and the Heir come to full Age, God deals with us now, no more, as with Children in Non-age ; but as with Men who are come to Knowledge and Understanding. This I desire may be considered, that whatsoever was a Type or Shadow, did appertain to the Old Covenant ; and a great Error or Mistake 'tis, for any to say, the Shadows of the Ceremonial Law were Gospel, because they pointed to the Gospel ; which Mistake I shall farther clear up hereafter, and proceed to the Fourth Proof.

Gal. 4. 30. Cast out the Bond-woman and her Son.

What is meant by the Bond-woman *Agar*, and *Ishmael* her Son ; you may see, if you read *vers. 23, 24, 25.* It is written, that *Abraham* had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman, *vers. 22.* But he, who was born of the bond-woman, was born after the *Flesh* ; but he of the free woman was by promise.

By being born after the *Flesh*, is opposed to him that was born by the Promise, the meaning is *Ishmael* ; tho' he was *Abraham's Seed* or Son, according to the *Flesh*, yet he was not his Seed nor Son according to the Promise, or Covenant of Grace, God made with *Abraham*. Which

Which things are an Allegory; for these are the two Covenants, the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage. ver. 24.

An *Allegory*, is that by which another thing or things are meant; or it hath a *mystical* Signification; more is to be understood then is expressed *literally*.

i. e. *Agar* held forth the first Covenant God made with *Abraham's* fleshly Seed, and *Ishmael* the Children of the first Covenant; *Sarah* signified the Gospel, or the New Covenant; and *Isaac* the Children of the New Covenant.

Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? *Cast out the Bond-woman and her son; for the son of the Bond-woman shall not be Heir with the son of the free woman.* ver. 30.

The Drift and Scope of the Spirit of God in this place is (as I conceive) *First*, To shew that there were two Covenants made with *Abraham*, (which no doubt he himself, who is called the Friend of God, well understood) one with his natural Seed as such; the other with his spiritual Seed as such. *Secondly*, That the casting out of the *Bond-woman* shews the Abrogation of the *first Covenant*, and all the external federal and fleshly Rights and Privileges thereof, and the casting out of the Seed of the *Bond-woman*, shews the utter *rooting out*, and rejection of the *external and political Church-State* of the Jews. *Thirdly*, That none of the fleshly Seed as such, should be Heirs and Partakers with the true spiritual Seed of *Abraham* under the Gospel, or have a Being in *Abraham's* true spiritual House or Gospel Church.

These Things being so, what reason there is for any to plead for *Infants Church Membership*, by vertue of the Covenant made with *Abraham*, let all Men consider. See *Heb. 8. 13.* Therefore from hence I argue, that whatsoever external Rights or Privileges the Jews had under the old Covenant, it signifies just nothing to us, under the Dispensation of the Gospel; even no more then a Legacy bequeathed in a former Will, is pleadable, which is left out in the last Will and Testament, confirmed by the Death of the Testator.

I would have all Men consider, that whether there is any more ground for Men from thence to plead for Infant Church-Membership, then for others to plead for Ministers to have the first Fruits, and the Tenth of every Man's increase; or for me to argue thus, Every Child of a Christian is born a Member of the Christian Church; because under the Law every Child of the Jews, were born Members of their Church; (and it must needs be so then, because theirs was a National Church;) or for every Ministers Son to plead for a Right to the Ministry: for evident it is, that all the Sons of the Priests under the Law, had a Right to the Priest-hood; (tho' they were not to enter into the Ministry untill such an Age :) Also particularly to dedicate all our first-born to the Lord, because the Jews were required so to do. Nay, I may say more, by the Covenant of Circumcision *Abraham's* Natural Offspring had a Right to possess the Land of Canaan: shall we from thence say,

all

all our Seed have an equal Right to that Promise ; if we could persuade our selves of this, we may think of another Holy War, and get our Seed their Rightfull Possession : the like, as touching our keeping their Sabbath.

Lastly, And evident 'tis, all that were Circumcised had an undeniable Right to eat the Passover (which they that assert Circumcision was a Type of Baptism, say, also was a Figure of the Lord's Supper) and if so, then it follows by the same Argument and Parity of Reason, all our Children that are admitted to the Ordinance of Baptism, may, nay, must be also admitted to the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper (as indeed they were by the *Ancient Fathers*, who first brought in the Practice of Infant Baptism, and so it continu'd for some Hundred of Years : see *Exod.* 12. 45. All the whole Family had a Right to eat the Passover, except Foreigners, and Hired Servants.

But in a word, *The Ax is laid to the root of the trees*, all these Jewish Rights and Privileges are gone with their national, external Church State : for as the First Covenant, *i. e.* The Bond woman is cast out, so are all her Children also.

Obj. *How can this be, that the Children of Abraham, and so the Children of Believers, who are Abraham's Seed, should not have Right to Gospel Privileges and Baptism, seeing you cannot deny but that it was the Covenant of Grace that God made with Abraham.*

Ans. I have told you already, that there was two Covenants made with *Abraham* ; the Covenant of Grace was that Covenant which is called the Promise, which God made with him, and nothing can be more clear, then that the fleshly Seed as such, (tho' they proceeded from *Abraham's* Loins,) were not concerned in that Covenant or free Promise of Grace.

But since this is doubted of by some, and utterly denied by others, *viz.* That there was a Two-fold Covenant made with *Abraham*, I shall endeavour to make this very plain and evident, tho' indeed, what I have already said, may be sufficient to unprejudiced Persons : But to proceed, I shall shew what Promises and Privileges appertained to the natural Seed, as such, and what Promises appertained to his true Spiritual Seed, and none else.

First, I will begin with that Covenant made with *Abraham's* natural Seed, as such, I never yet heard, but that the Covenants take their denomination from the Promises, and the Promises are of Two sorts, quite different in their Nature, *i. e.* some *Domestick* and *Civil Promises*, especially and absolutely respecting the House and natural Seed of *Abraham* and policy of *Israel*.

Others only respecting those that are Believers in Christ, or *Evangelical* ; belonging to them the Gospel Covenant belongeth.

1. The First that belonged to *Abraham's* natural Seed as such, that I shall mention, is that of his multiplying his natural Seed by *Isaac*.

2. The Birth of *Isaac* by *Sarah* his Wife, *Gen.* 17. 16, 19.

3. The Continuation of his Covenant, with all that should proceed from *Isaac*, according to the Flesh, *Gen.* 17. 6.

4. The Coming of Christ out of Isaac.
5. The bringing the natural Seed of Abraham, by Isaac, out of Egypt.
6. The Promise of giving his natural Seed the Land of Canaan for their Possession, Gen. 15. 8.

Now pray note Two Things :

First, That as the Covenant of Grace bears the Name of the Promise of God, not a conditional, but an absolute Promise; so likewise say I, these Promises, distinct from that free Promise, contain the legal Covenant made with Abraham's natural Seed.

If you well mind the Nature of these Promises I have mentioned, you can't so much as once in the least imagine, any of them were made to his spiritual Seed as such, I mean, that any of them do, or can concern us Gentile Believers.

Secondly, But to put the Matter out of doubt, pray observe that the Law of Circumcision is expressly called Gods Covenant; tho' I know some, to strengthen their bad Cause, would have it be so called, only by a certain Figure; pray read Gen. 17. *And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore thou and thy seed after thee, in their Generations, vers. 9. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee, every male child among you shall be circumcised, vers. 10. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your fore-skin, and it shall be a Token of the Covenant betwixt me and you: and that to this Covenant was promised the Land of Canaan, 'tis expressly said in vers. 8. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God. So in Gen. 15. 8. In that same day God made a covenant with Abram, (not Abraham) saying, unto thy seed, have I given this land from the River of Egypt, unto the great River Euphrates.*

This Covenant, and these Promises I assert, cannot belong to the spiritual Seed of Abraham as such, but were Blessings that belonged only to his carnal or natural Seed, and directly agree with the Covenant made with them by Moses, viz. The Land of Canaan, Riches, Peace, Plenty, and all other Temporal and Earthly Blessings, if they kept God's Covenant (with their Church State, and visible Worship of God among them :) Now the New Covenant it could not be, because that is established upon better Promises, and no other People had any Right to those outward Blessings; nor were they made only to the Elect Ones, who were of his natural Off-spring, but to his fleshly Seed as such, as well as they; upon that Condition, they kept the Covenant of Circumcision, and conformed themselves to the Law God gave them, which they were obliged to do by the Covenant of Circumcision, as I shewed before.

Secondly, I shall now shew you, what those Promises were, that respect the Covenant of Grace made with Abraham, and his true spiritual Seed, as such.

1. I have made thee a Father of many Nations, (meaning Gentile Believers) Gen. 17. 6.
2. In

2. In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, Gen. 12. 3. Observe here what the Apostle speaks, And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through faith, preached the Gospel to Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed, Gal. 3. 8.

Nay, and 'tis for ever to be noted, That the Holy Apostle endeavours to do the very same thing in Gal. 3. 16. which I am now about, viz. To prove, That the Covenant of Grace was not made with Abraham's fleshly Seed, as such; read the Text, Now to Abraham and to his seed was the promise made; he saith, not to seeds, as of many (meaning his fleshly Seed, as such) but to thy seed which is Christ. And then in vers. 29. he concludes, And if ye be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the Promise.

You must not reckon from Abraham, but from Christ: He must be blind that can't discern from hence, that there were Two Covenants made with Abraham. Compare these Texts with that in Rom. 9. 6, 7, 8.

Obj. But the Jews might object (they not seeing nor understanding this Two-fold Covenant) if we are rejected of God, and rooted out, God is unfaithfull and his Promise made of none Effect to Abraham, and 'tis his seed.

1. Ans^r. The Apostle Answers, They are not all Israel, which are of Israel, vers. 6.
2. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all Children, ver. 7. That is, though they be all the Seed of Abraham, according to the Flesh, yet they are not all his spiritual Seed, according to that Covenant of Grace made with Abraham, all the true spiritual Seed are the Children of God, as Isaac was, being begotten and brought forth as the product of Almighty Power, as fruit of God's Free Promise; I will come, and Sarah shall have a Son: see the Apostle's further answer, That is, they which are born after the Flesh, these are not the Children of God, but the Children of the Promise are counted for the Seed, vers. 8.

Martin Luther confirms the same great Truth we contend for: Paul therefore concludeth with this Sentence (saith he) that they that are of Faith, are the Children of Abraham; that corporal Birth, or carnal Seed, make not the Children of Abraham before God; as if he would say, there is none before God accounted as the Child of Abraham (who is the Servant of God, whom God hath chosen and made Righteous by Faith) through carnal Generation; but such Children must be given before God, as he was a Father; but he was a Father of Faith, was justified, and pleased God, not because he could beget Children after the Flesh, not because he had Circumcision under the Law, but because he believed in God. He therefore that will be a Child of the Believing Abraham, must also himself believe, or else he is not a Child of the Elect; the believing and the justified Abraham, not the begetting Abraham; which is nothing else, but a Man conceived, and born, and wrap'd in Sin, without the Forgiveness of Sins, without Faith, without the Holy Ghost, as another Man is, and therefore Condemned. Such also, are the Children carnally begotten

begotten of him, having nothing in them, like unto their Father, but
 'Flesh and Blood, Sin and Death; therefore these are also Damned: this
 'glorious boasting then, we are the Seed of *Abraham*, is to no purpose.
 Thus far *Luther*, on *Gal.* 3. p. 115.

This *Mr. Perkins* speaks also: 'The Seed of *Abraham* (*saiſt be*) is
 'the Seed, not of the Flesh but of the Promise; and this Seed is firſt
 'Chriſt, and then all that believe in Chriſt; for these are given to *Abra-*
 '*ham* by Promise and Election of God: moreover, the Seed is not ma-
 '*ny* (as *Paul* obſerveth) but one. It is Objected, That the Word Seed,
 'is a Name Co-elective, and ſignifies the whole Poſterity of *Abraham*.
 '*Anſw.* It doth ſometimes, (*saiſt be*) but not always; for *Eve* ſaiſt of
 '*Seb*, God hath given me another Seed: Again, (*be ſaiſt*) this one par-
 '*ticular* Seed of *Abraham* is Chriſt Jeſus, here the Name Chriſt, firſt and
 'principally the Mediator, and then Secondly, all *Jews* and *Gentiles* be-
 'lieving, that are ſit and grafted into Chriſt by Faith: *St. Paul* ſaiſt,
 'The Children of the Fleſh, thoſe are not the Children of God; but
 'the Children of the Promise, are the Seed of *Abraham*. Thus *Mr. Per-*
 '*kins*.

2. Now nothing is more evident then that by the Promise is meant, the
 Covenant of Grace, the Children of the Promise, made with *Abraham*,
 are Children of the New Covenant, and ſo generally owned by all, our
True Proteſtant Writers; and this Promise or Covenant we find, was only
 made with *Abraham's* ſpiritual Seed, as theſe Two famous Writers, and
 many more poſitively affirm.

3. Yet alſo it is plain, there was a Covenant made with *Abraham's* na-
 tural Seed, and that they were taken into an external, national Church
 State, and Covenant relation with God, and had divers peculiar Immuni-
 ties and Privileges granted to them, as ſo conſidered; all which fully evin-
 ces, that there was a Two-fold Covenant made with *Abraham*: Certainly
 none can ſuppoſe, but that their Church State and Legal Rights were Cove-
 nant Bleſſings, and that they begun in *Abraham*; and that too, by thoſe
 Covenant Tranſactions, God made him, is ſo clear, that nothing need to
 be ſaid more unto it; and I cannot but wonder that our eminent Writers,
 ſhould confound and jumble theſe Two Covenants together; as indeed I
 find generally they do.

Obj. But ſome will ſtill Object, that tho' this which I have ſaid be granted,
 i. e. That there were Two Covenants made with *Abraham*, yet ſay they, Circumci-
 ſion was a Goſpel Covenant, or did appertain to the Covenant of Grace.

Anſw. I answer, and poſitively affirm, That the Covenant of Circum-
 ciſion was part of that legal, old, and external Covenant, which is done a-
 way: And this in the next place I ſhall fully prove.

1. Be cauſe the Law, or Covenant of Circumciſion, was, it appears,
 made in the Deſign and End of it, to ſeparate the natural Seed of *Abraham*
 in their National Church, ſtanding from all other Nations of the World,
 and

and to give them the Land of *Canaan*, and to keep themselves Pure, from mixing among the People, from whom Christ, according to the Flesh was to come: And hence it was, that they were not to mingle themselves with the Heathens, nor suffer any to join themselves to them, unless first Circumcised. Will any say that the Covenant of Grace, or Gospel Covenant, in the Design of it, is to separate all True Believers, and all their natural Seed (tho' some of them are the worst of Men, *i. e.* vile and ungodly) from all other People in the World, in a Church State? If they should affirm this, then the Gospel Church, for ever ceases to be *Congregational*, but must be *National* as the *Jewish Church* was, which is contrary to the Doctrine of the Church of *England* (whatever her Practice is) Doth not she say, *The Church of God is a company of Godly Christians, among whom the Word of God is truly preach'd, and the Sacraments duly and truly administered?* and do not the Godly Independants say the same? Did Christ ever, under the Gospel, constitute any one Nation, consisting of Believers, and their carnal Off-spring (some godly, and some ungodly) into a Church? read over the New Testament, and see whether the direct contrary, is not apparent; for they were only such, who believed were converted and professed Faith in Christ, and so were Baptized, that were added to the Church; and of such only doth the Gospel Church consist.

2. But observe the other part of this Argument, *i. e.* a Circumcision was a token to *Abraham's* natural Seed of God's giving unto them the Land of *Canaan*, see *Gen. 17. 7.* *And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, &c. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, &c. and ye shall circumcise the flesh of your fore-skin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you, vers. 11.* The Gospel Covenant, the Apostle tells us, is established upon better Promises, not an Earthly *Canaan*, but Heaven it self: What, tho' *Canaan* was a Type of Heaven, that will not mend the matter, for then it follows that it belonged to the Old typical and shadowing Covenant: Moreover, if that Covenant was the Gospel Covenant, our Children have an equal Right to the Land of *Canaan*, with the natural Seed of *Abraham* (as I said before) and then how did that Promise, *viz.* The Possession of *Canaan* belong then to the Jews, as their peculiar Right only.

Arg. 2. Because there were some to whom the Covenant of Grace, or Gospel Covenant did not belong, were, nevertheless, commanded to be Circumcised, as *Ishmael*, *Esau*, &c. Doth the Gospel Covenant appertain to Scoffing *Ishmaelites*, and to prophane *Esau's*? No, God told *Abraham*, his Covenant should not be with *Ishmael*. *As for Ishmael, I have heard thee, be-hold I have blessed him, but my covenant will I establish with Isaac.* *Gen. 17. 20, 21.*

Also, there were others who might be in *Abraham's* Family; who, no doubt, might some of them be in the Covenant of Grace, that were not required to be Circumcised, nor did it belong to them, *viz.*

1. All his Male Children, who dyed before Eight Days old.
2. All his Female Children.
3. There was also some other godly Men, in the Days of *Abraham*, to whom Circumcision of Right did not belong, as *Melchisedec*, *Lot*, *Job*, &c. Doubtless, had Circumcision been a Law or Precept of the Covenant of Grace, all these would God have required to have been Circumcised as well as the others; but the Truth is, being in the Covenant of Grace, gave no Right at all to any, no nor to the Male Children of *Abraham*, to Circumcision; but only God's express and positive Command to him.

Arg. 3. 'Tis apparent, that the Jews who were comprehended in that legal and external Covenant, made with *Abraham's* natural Seed, and were accordingly Circumcised, were nevertheless denyed Gospel Baptism, and their Plea, *we are Abraham's Seed*, was rejected by *John Baptist's*. Now had Circumcision been a Gospel-Covenant, I see no Reason why *John* should not admit them; nay, and 'tis plain also, that some godly Ones of *Abraham's* natural Seed, who were Circumcised, were nevertheless Baptized. What, had they Two Seals of one and the same Covenant? for Circumcision was in force at that time, when many of them were Baptized; for many subjected to that Ordinance, before Christ dyed, and abolished that Rite with the Old Covenant.

1. From hence it appears, that Circumcision was no Gospel-Law, nor did it appertain to the Covenant of Grace; but was part of the Old legal Covenant, which the *Ac* was laid to the Root of, and is gone.

2. It also follows from hence, that the Covenant of Grace, was not the adequate Reason of Circumcision, but the mere positive Command of God to *Abraham*, for the Reasons and Designs before-mentioned.

From whence I argue thus, That Covenant that was made with, or did of Right belong unto the fleshly Seed of *Abraham*, as such, even to ungodly Ones, as well as to the godly, was not the Covenant of Grace; but the Covenant or Law of Circumcision, was made with, or did of Right belong unto the Fleshly Seed of *Abraham*, as such, even unto ungodly Ones, as well as to the godly: Therefore the Covenant of Circumcision was not the Covenant of Grace.

I have shewed you that Circumcision did belong to *Ismael*. and to *Esau*, and to all *Isaac's* natural Seed, tho' ungodly, and to their Male Children also; and I need not tell you what wicked Men sprang from *Isaac's* Loins, according to the Flesh, but let them be ungodly, and not have one dram of New Covenant Grace in them; yet they were obliged to Circumcise their Male Infants. This is enough (one would think) to convince our Brethren, and all that differ from us, that Circumcision did not appertain to the Covenant of Grace, or was no Gospel Covenant. Also let them take heed (who plead for *Pedo-Baptism*, from the Covenant of Circumcision) how they any more deny to Baptize the Children of ungodly Parents, since the Male Infants of ungodly Parents were Circumcised. The Truth is, it was not to be enquired, Whether the Parents were Believers or not? whether

whether they had *Abraham's Faith*, or not? were godly, or not, before their Children were to be Circumcised? but were they the natural Seed of *Abraham*? (that was enough) it was that according to the expresse and positive Command of God to *Abraham*, that gave their Children, if Males, a Right to be Circumcised.

Arg. 4. That Circumcision was no Gospel Law, or Covenant, appears yet further, because all in the Gospel Covenant, 'tis expressly said, shall know the Lord, *Jer. 31. 31. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they break, although I was an husband to them, saith the Lord. ver. 32. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ver. 33. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord, &c.*

Pray observe, in the Old Covenant Infants were Members, who did not (when taken into that Covenant, and made Members of that legal Church) know the Lord, nor indeed their right Hand from their left. Therefore they, when grown up, had need to be taught, *saying, Know the Lord*; and thus, upon this Account, every one had need to teach his Neighbour and his Brother; but in the Gospel Covenant, God saith, it should not be thus, for that all, whom he would make that Covenant with, should know him, before they were received as Members of that Church, tho' afterwards 'tis granted, they stand in need of further teaching.

And in this respect, the Gospel Covenant, and Gospel Church State, differs, or is not according to the Old legal and external Covenant, and Church State of the Jews, as well as in other things; that being a conditional Covenant, the New Covenant Absolute, *I will, and they shall*, that was a Covenant of Works, this of Grace, &c. *They shall all know me from the least to the greatest; not one Infant then be sure is in it, as a Member of the Gospel Church, they are now required to repent, to believe, to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.* They must be made Disciples by Teaching as appears by the great Commission, *Mat. 28, 19, 20.* before Baptized, who are to be Members of the Gospel Church.

Arg. 5. The Covenant of Circumcision could not be the Gospel Covenant, because the Terms of it runs according to the *Sinai Covenant*, which is said, *not to be of faith, but (1) the man that doth those things should live in them, Gal. 3. 22. (2) Life was promised to Obedience to it, and Death threatned to Disobedience. (3) The Promise of the Sinai Covenant, was the Land of Canaan, Riches, Peace, and Prosperity, to be Blessed in the Basket and Store; and so runs the Covenant of Circumcision, see Gen. 17. 9, 10, 14. Thou shalt keep my covenant, &c. and I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee,*

the land of Canaan, &c. ver. 8. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his fore-skin is not circumcised, that Soul shall be cut off from his People, he hath broken my Covenant, ver. 14. Thus ran the Law and Covenant of Circumcision, it was Life upon the Condition of Obedience, Death upon Disobedience, 'twas *do and live*; but thus runs not the Terms of the New Covenant, but directly contrarywise, *believe, and thou shalt be saved*, are the Terms of the Gospel Covenant; from whence I shall draw this Argument.

That Covenant that was in the Nature and Quality of it, as much a Covenant of Works, as the Sinai Covenant, could not be the Covenant of Grace. But so was the Law and Covenant of Circumcision. Therefore Circumcision was no Gospel Law or Covenant.

Arg. 6. The Covenant of Circumcision was of the Letter, and not of the Spirit. This the Apostle lays down, Rom. 3. 29. But he is not a Jew which is one outward; and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of man but of God. Doth he not clearly hereby intimate, that Circumcision of the Flesh was of the Law, and not of the Gospel? for by Letter, the Law is meant, all Expositors confess, in that parallel Text, *2 Cor. 5. Who hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter but of the spirit*, see our late worthy Annotators, by the Letter: 'Here (say they) the Apostle understandeth the Law, or the Law, is called the Letter, *Rom. 2. 27. Who by the letter and Circumcision, doth transgress the Law.* The Law (say they) in opposition to the Gospel, is called the Letter; and again they say, the Gospel is called the Spirit, both in opposition to the carnal Ordinances of the Law, and because Christ is the *Master, Subject, and Argument of it.* The Law kills, but the Gospel gives Life; yet some affirm, that Law written in Stones was the Gospel, or a dark ministration of it: What Law is it then that kills? and what was the Covenant of Works, which as such is taken away? But no more of that: here 'tis plain, Circumcision was not of the Spirit, *i. e.* not of the Gospel, but of the Law.

Arg. 7. That Covenant, in which Faith was not reckoned to Abraham for Righteousness, was not the Covenant of Grace, or a Gospel Covenant: But the Apostle shews us, That Faith was not reckoned to Abraham in Circumcision, Rom. 4. That faith was reckoned to Abraham, for righteousness, vers 9. How then was it reckoned when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision, not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision? ver. 10.

What need was there for St. Paul to argue thus against Circumcision, if it were, as our Brethren say, a Gospel Law, Precept, or Covenant; and remarkable 'tis, that the Apostle puts, (in this Chapter) the Law and Circumcision together, as being of one stamp, or of the same nature, and excludes them both from the free Promise of God made to Abraham, which I have shew'd was the Pure Gospel, or New Covenant: Reader, see Mr. Philip Cory's *Solemn Call*, where thou wilt meet with this, and some other

other of these Arguments largely opened, and his Reply to Mr. Flavel, both worth thy reading.

Arg. 8. The Law or Covenant of Circumcision, is (as the said worthy Writer observes) contrary distinguished or opposed) by the Apostle, in *Rom. 4.*) to the Covenant of Faith, or Gospel Covenant, therefore could not be one, nor of the same Nature, read 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14, verse.

Arg. 9. That Covenant or Precept that profited none, unless they kept the Law, could not belong to the Covenant of Grace; but so the Apostle speaks of Circumcision, *For circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law, Rom. 2. 25.* That is, as I have observed, if thou keep the Law perfectly, but if thou break the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision, that is of none effect. 'Tis strange to me that Circumcision should be a Gospel Covenant; and yet not profit any, unless they perfectly kept the Law, and also obliged them so to do, *Gal. 5. 3.* Could a Man have perfectly kept the Law of the Old Covenant, he might have thereby been justified in the sight of God, and then no need of a Christ to have fulfilled the Righteousness of it for us, and in our nature. — But doth a Gospel Precept oblige any to the perfect keeping of the whole Law: How then could this be a Gospel Precept? O see how the Law and Circumcision agree, and comport together in their nature, end, use and design, and never plead for it as a Gospel Precept any more, unless you have a mind to bring your Selves and Children under the Old Covenant, and the Curse thereof; compare this with *Gal. 5. 3.* *For I testifie to every man among you that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.*

Not as a late Writer says in his Opinion, or in his intention that was Circumcised, that he was such a Debtor: for it may be justly doubted, Whether they so thought or not: nay, by the Apostle's Words it seems otherwise, *i. e.* They did not think any such thing (tho' they might seek to be justified by the Law, and Circumcision, yet not that they thought themselves obliged to keep the whole Law perfectly) but they who were Circumcised, were verily obliged by Circumcision, to do the whole Law, when Circumcision was in Force. Whatsoever Mr. John Flavel hath said in his late Book to the contrary, notwithstanding, in Answer to Mr. Cary: And indeed; the *Annotators* agree with us herein; thus I find they express themselves.

Object. ' But did not the Fathers then, by being Circumcised, acknowledge themselves Debtors to the Law.

Answer. ' Yes, they did acknowledge themselves bound to the observation of the Law, and to endure (upon the breaking of it) the Curse of it, but they were discharged from this Obligation, by believing in the Lord; Jesus Christ, who was made a Curse for them.

Arg. 10. The Covenant of Circumcision could not belong to the Gospel Covenant, because 'tis called; in express terms, a Yoke of Bondage,

Act. 15. 10. Gal. 5. 1, 2. Now therefore why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers, nor we, were able to bear.

I wonder any should call Circumcision a Privilege ; the Yoke was Circumcision, which those false Teachers would have put on Men, who were Believers among the Gentiles ; see *vers. 1.* If the Jews had any Profit, Advantage or Privilege by it , it was chiefly, because unto them were committed the Oracles of God, or Ten Commandments, not chiefly, because unto them was given the Covenant of Grace ; for had it been a Gospel Covenant , or a Rite thereof (as our mistaken Opposers affirm) he would have said so ; see his Words, *What advantage then hath the Jew ? and what profit is there in Circumcision, Rom. 3. 1. Much every way, but chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles of God, ver. 2.* It did not seal to them the Covenant of Grace, nor assure them of the Blessings thereof ; for so a Seal doth all the Blessings and Privileges of that Covenant, to which it is prefix'd, but the direct contrary, *i. e.* it assur'd them, That they should have the Law given to them ; the Oracles of God, *i. e.* The *Sinai Covenant*, which Law shewed them what a kind of Righteousness it was, God did require of all Men that would be justified in God's sight ; it was not given to them to give Life, or Righteousness, but to shew the exceeding *filthiness* of Sin, and to regulate their Lives, to put a curb upon their Lusts so hateful to God ; as also, to discover unto them, that nothing short of a perfect and compleat Righteousness, could justify the Creature in the sight of God ; and so the Law, through the weakness of the Flesh, lay'd all Men under Death and Condemnation, exacting hard Service, but gave no Strength to perform its Demands ; it killed, but could not give Life : And therefore, as it was a Covenant of Works, (*do this and live, or the man that doth these things (shall live in them)*) which Christ abolished it by the Blood of his Cross.

And since it appears by what the Apostle says, That Circumcision obliged (while it was in Force) to do all the whole Law, which he that did not so do, was Cursed by it ; 'tis evident, that instead of its being a Covenant of Grace, or the Seal thereof, it rather sealed the Curses of the Law upon them, for their Disobedience ; and therefore, such a yoke of Bondage, which they nor their Fathers were able to bear.

Circumcision, it appears then, was an Earnest to Abraham's natural Seed of the *Sinai Covenant* ; which Law was, ('tis evident comprehended as a Covenant of Works) in Circumcision, and so Circumcision was a Part or Branch of it ; God then, and at that time, taking his natural Seed into an external Covenant Relation with himself, was thereby, in his Wisdom, obliged to give the said Law in Tables of Stone to them, for the Reasons, Use and End, before mentioned ; and as 'tis by our Apostle frequently in his Epistles hinted, the Apostle (as a Learned Writer observes) doth not here begin a Discourse, nor to the number of Privileges and Advantages ;
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for he names but one in all, but to the quality of this Privilege, viz. That it was not an Evangelical, or Gospel Privilege, but only a Legal or Old Covenant Rite and Privilege; this is the Chief of all the Advantages the Jews had by Circumcision, i. e. there having thereby an assurance, that the Law of God, on Mount *Sinai*, should be given to them: So much as to the Proof and Demonstration, That Circumcision was no Gospel-Precept, or Covenant.

Obj. But, perhaps, some may Object, If Infants as such, were not included in the Covenant of Grace God made with *Abraham*, how can dying Infants be saved?

1. *Ans/w.* I Answer, Must Infants of Believers be comprehended in that Covenant God made with *Abraham*? or else, Cannot any dying Infants be saved? How then were any dying Infants saved before *Abraham's* Days, or before that Covenant was made with him?

2. I never said no Infants were included in the Covenant of Grace, God made with *Abraham*, but not as such: No doubt, all Elect Persons, both Infants and the Adult, were included in the Covenant of Grace, and had or shall have the Blessings of Christ's Blood and Merits; but the Covenant of Grace may be considered Two manner of ways, or under a Two-fold Consideration.

1st. The inward invisible Blessings, Grace, and Privileges of it.

2^d. The visible and outward Administration, or Privileges thereof.

1. Now who they be, that are comprehended, or included in the inward, and invisible Blessings, Grace and Privileges of it, are only known to God, not to us: But the Gospel, or Covenant of Grace, as to the outward Administration, and Privileges thereof, only belong to such who know the Lord, or profess Faith in Jesus Christ; and therefore, all that have a Right to Baptism, and Gospel Church Membership, must first be made Disciples, by being taught by the Word and Spirit of God, and so truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the great Commission of our Saviour, *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. and the Practice of Christ himself, *Joh.* 4. 1, 2. and of his Apostles, *Act.* 2. 37. *Act.* 8. 14, &c. *Act.* 10. and *Act.* 16. &c.

God hath many ways (as Dr. Taylor observes) to save dying Infants, which we know not; he can apply the benefit, and merits of Christ's Blood to them, in ways we are wholly Ignorant of, and ought not to trouble our Selves with it: *Secret Things belong to God, but revealed Things to us, and to our Children.*

3. But if we did know which Infants would dye, who do belong to the Election of Grace, or are in Covenant with God, yet we ought not to Baptize them, because we have no Command from Jesus Christ, so to do; for it was not the Right of Infants to be Circumcised, because they were in the Covenant of Grace (for then all other godly Mens Children, who lived in *Abraham's* Days, would have had the same Right that *Abraham's* Children had; nor was it the Right of *Abraham's* Infants (whether consi-

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3. But if we did know which Infants would dye, who do belong to the Election of Grace, or are in Covenant with God, yet we ought not to Baptize them, because we have no Command from Jesus Christ, so to do; for it was not the Right of Infants to be Circumcised, because they were in the Covenant of Grace (for then all other godly Mens Children, who lived in *Abraham's* Days, would have had the same Right that *Abraham's* Children had; nor was it the Right of *Abraham's* Infants (whether considered

dered as his natural Seed, or spiritual Seed, as such) but it was their Right only. By that mere exprefs and positive Command of God, to *Abraham*, it was, that, I say, gave all his Male Infants a Right to Circumcision, and nothing else: Now Baptism is also a mere positive Precept, as Circumcision was then, — Therefore none have a Right thereto, but such whom Christ commands to be Baptized, namely Believers; Was *Abraham's* Females, or his Males, under Eight Days old, Circumcised? or, Had they any Right unto it, tho' they might be in the Covenant of Grace?

11thly, All those that were in the Covenant of Grace, God made with *Abraham*, had thereby an undoubted Right to all the Blessings of the said Covenant, and also had the Privileges, and Blessings thereof, by the Spirit of God Sealed to them, and were made sure of eternal Life; but all those that were in the Covenant of Circumcision, God made with *Abraham*, or were Circumcised, had not, thereby, an undoubted Right to all the Blessings of the said Covenant; nor had they the Privileges, and Blessings thereof Sealed to them, nor was eternal Life made sure to them thereby: Therefore, the Covenant of Circumcision was not the Covenant of Grace, nor the Seal thereof. The major is clear from Rom. 4. 16. *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.* What Seed doth the Apostle mean? certainly all *Abraham's* Seed, that the Covenant of Grace was made with; and none will deny, but that the Promise here comprehends all the Blessings and Privileges of the Covenant of Grace; compare this with that in Heb. 6. *For, when God made promise to Abraham, because he could not swear by no greater, he swear by himself,* ver. 13. *Saying, surely blessing, I will bless thee; and multiplying, I will multiply thee,* ver. 14. *And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise,* ver. 15. *For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath of confirmation, is to them an end of all strife,* ver. 16. *Wherein God is willing, more abundantly, to shew unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath,* ver. 17. The Promise here refers to the Promise, or Covenant of Grace made with *Abraham*, and 'tis as sure to all his Seed comprehended in that same Covenant, as possibly can be; the very Oath of God is added, besides his faithful Word to confirm it; as to the minor, sure none can Dream, that *Ishmael*, or *Esau*, or the ungodly Jews that sprung from *Isaac's* Loyns, in their Generations, till Christ came, had undoubted Right to, and Interest in all the Blessings and Privileges of the Covenant of Grace; or eternal Life, made sure to them: do not we read that some of them were called *Sons of Belial*? and of some of them (our Saviour saith) they were of their Father, the Devil.

12thly, All those that were in the Covenant of Grace, God made with *Abraham*, had thereby a sure and strong Ground of Consolation, that is, Spiritual Consolation; but many of them that were comprehended in the Covenant of Circumcision, had not thereby a sure and strong Ground of Consolation, that is, spiritual Consolation, therefore, the Covenant of Circumcision,

cumcision, was not the Covenant of Grace; see *Heb. 6. 18.* That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have strange consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have, as the anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. Now certainly, no Man can think, all that the Covenant of Circumcision did belong unto, had such sure and strong Ground of Consolation thereby; for *Ishmael* had none, *Esau* had none, and Multitudes more of *Abraham's* natural Seed.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

First, **I** May infer from hence, That they who bring Infants of Believers into the Gospel Covenant, or Gospel Church, err exceedingly, and are severely to be reprehended, there being not the least Shadow of Ground, for their Practice herein from the Covenant God made with *Abraham*,

Secondly, It also appears from hence, That the main Pillar of Infants Baptism, is rooted up, the Ax is laid to the Root of the Trees, the external or natural Off-spring of *Abraham*, or by Descent from an external Fædoral, or Covenant Relation to him; or as they are the carnal Off-spring of Believers.

Thirdly, From hence also I infer, That the Children of Believing Gentiles, as such, are not the Seed of *Abraham*, to whom the Covenant of Grace was made: Nay, let me tell you, that it appears from hence, That the Children of Believing Gentiles as such, are neither the natural Seed of *Abraham*, nor his spiritual Seed; which to open yet more fully, let us now consider all the distinct Sorts of *Abraham's* Seed, which, I find, were Fourfold.

1. Christ, personally considered to *Abraham* and his Seed, was the Promise made, he saith, *Not as of seeds as to many, but as of one, and to thy seed which is Christ,* *Gal. 3. 16.* Now as the Promise refers to Christ, so the Infants of believing Gentiles, all will say are not *Abraham's* Seed.

2. All the Elect, or whole Body of Believers, who have the Faith of *Abraham*, and walk in the Steps of *Abraham*, these are called *Abraham's* Seed: Now none can be so blind, as once to suppose, the Children of Believing Gentiles as such, are the Seed of *Abraham*. Can Infants believe in God, as *Abraham* did? or, Can they walk in his Steps? or, which is more, are their natural Off-spring as such, of the Election of Grace? Doth it appear so? or, Doth it not appear, to the contrary? *viz.* Do not many of their Seed prove wicked and ungodly Persons, and so live and dye? Certainly, were they all as such Elect, they should be all Converted, we are chosen to be Holy, &c. *Eph. 14. 4.* and if you be Christ's, then are you *Abraham's* Seed and Heirs according to the Promise, *Gal. 3. 29.*

3. There was another i. e. a Natural Seed of *Abraham*, to whom the Promise was made; and that was *Isaac*, *Gen. 21. 22.* but the Children of believing Gentiles as such, or as so considered, are not *Isaac* in that respect, they cannot be the Seed of *Abraham*; *Isaac* was begotten of *Abraham's* natural

Body according to the Flesh, and all spiritual *Isaac's* are regenerated Persons. *Gal. 4. 28.*

4. We read yet of another Natural Seed of *Abraham*, to whom the Promise of Grace did not belong, as *Ishmael*, and the Sons of *Keturah*, *Gen. 15. 5.* but as they were the Seed of *Abraham*, none will say the Children of believing Gentiles are the Seed of *Abraham*: now I affirm, that there is no mention made of any other Seed of *Abraham* but these four sorts, if any man can shew a fifth sort, let him: from hence I shall again draw this Argument, *viz.* If the Children of the believing Gentiles as such, are not the natural Seed of *Abraham*, nor the spiritual Seed of *Abraham*; then they can have no Right as such to Baptism, nor to Church-Membership by virtue of being *Abraham's* Seed: nor are they any ways as such, concerned in that Covenant-Transaction God made with *Abraham*; but the Children of believing Gentiles as such are not the natural Seed of *Abraham*, nor the spiritual Covenant of *Abraham*: therefore they can have no right as such to Baptism, nor to Church-Membership, by virtue of *Abraham's* Covenant; nor are they any ways concerned in that Covenant-Transaction God made with *Abraham*.

Obj. *The Athenian Society in p. 2. of their Athenian Gazette affirm, that the Children of believing Gentiles are the spiritual Seed of Abraham, until by actual sin unrepented of, they are otherwise.*

Ans. To which I answer, (as I have once already) that then some of the true spiritual Seed of *Abraham* may eternally perish; for certainly, many Children of Believers, who when they grow up, proving to be prophane, unbelieving and impenitent Persons, and so live and dye, are eternally lost.

1. Which if so, the Covenant of Grace is not so well ordered in all things, and sure, as we believe it is, and the Scripture proves it is.

2. 'Tis also directly contrary to what *St. Paul* positively affirms in *Rom. 4. 16.* therefore it is of Faith, that it might be by Grace, to the end, the Promise might be sure to all the Seed, not to that which is of the Law, but to that which is of the Faith of *Abraham*, who is the Father of us all. If this be well consider'd, the Plea for our Infants, as such, being *Abraham's*, Seed is gone for ever: for I from hence argue again, that all that are in that Gospel Covenant God made with *Abraham*, or are his spiritual Seed have the Promise of eternal Life sure to them: but all the Seed of believing Gentiles, as such, have not the Promise of eternal Life sure to them, therefore the Children of believing Gentiles as such, are not the spiritual Seed of *Abraham*.

3. All that are in the Covenant of Grace, I mean all the true spiritual Seed of *Abraham*, have the Faith of *Abraham*, and walk in the steps of *Abraham*, and have also all the Privileges of the Gospel Covenant God made with him; but so have not the natural Seed of believing Gentiles as such, nor are they by Birth, *i. e.* by being born of believing Parents in a better Condition than others as such, being all being born in sin, and in the Co-
venant

venant of Works: indeed if Believers Children as such, were in Covenant as soon as begotten or born, then they are born in the Covenant of Grace; and if so, not the Children of Wrath by Nature, and if in the Covenant of Grace, then their State is good enough without Baptism; nor doth Baptism bring them into it, and if they say as some do, that the Children are brought into the Covenant of Grace by Baptism, and so made the Children of God, Members of Christ, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, then it follows, they had it not by virtue of being in Covenant with their Parents; and then also it would follow, that 'tis in the power of Men and Women to bring their Children into the Covenant of Grace, or keep them out of it; and so through Negligence or Ignorance, the Parents may damn their Children; and others have power to save theirs, by getting a Minister to Baptise them.

But if they do not suppose their Seed as such, are indeed, truly and really in the Covenant of Grace, what signifies that which they call the Covenant, to whom the Blessing of the Covenant do not belong? and if it seals not the Blessings of the Covenant, what doth it seal, or what spiritual Advantage do their Children receive thereby? Either they have the internal Blessings or Privileges sealed to them, or else the external Privileges thereof, or none at all: now I can't believe they judge they have right (as such) to the internal Blessings and Privileges, for then they must all be saved; unless those to whom the Promise is sure, (it being confirmed by the Oath of God) may eternally perish; I know they whom I have to do with, are averse to the Doctrine of falling from Grace. And if it seals the External Privileges of the Covenant to them, why are they denied those Privileges? Is not *Breaking of Bread*, and *Church-Fellowship*, the chief external Privileges of the Gospel-Church? We know as to *bearing the Word*, *Prayers* of the Church, our Children enjoy those Privileges as far forth, as theirs; besides, if they be not absolutely in the Covenant, but only conditionally *i. e.* if they believe they shall, &c. even what is that more than what the Children of Unbelievers have? shall not they be received into the Covenant also, if they believe, and close in with Christ?

I cannot learn, that they can inform us of any Benefit their Children above ours have, who are not baptised, (or other Miers) by their Baptism; or as they are their Seed as such; tho' 'tis evident *Abraham's natural Seed* had a Right to many external Privileges under that Dispensation as such; but I shall now proceed to answer some grand Objection made against what I have said.

Obj. 1. *The first is this, viz. There is an exact Parallel or Parity betwixt Circumcision and Baptism; therefore as Jewish Infants were circumcised, so the Children of Christian Gentiles may be baptised;* thus they argue:

Ans. I must deny that there is such a Parity, or clear Parallel, as they intimate between Circumcision and Baptism; but if there were, yet the Argument is good for nothing: but to prove the first, *i. e.* and that

that there is no such Parity, but in most things a Disparity, will now clearly be evinced.

1. Circumcision was a shadow of Christ to come, by whom we receive the great Antitype of Circumcision, *i.e.* the Circumcision of the heart, Col. 2. 12, 13. Baptism is a sign that Christ is already come; *dead, bury'd, and rais'd again.*

2. Circumcision was a sign of the Covenant with Abraham's natural Seed, above all other Nations, and a Token to them of many external Blessings and Privileges: Baptism is a sign of the inward and peculiar Graces of the Spirit the Person baptized hath received, if a true Subject of that Holy Ordinance.

3. Circumcision only belonged to Abraham's Male Children: Baptism belongs to all that believe truly in Christ, both Males and Females, who are all one in Christ Jesus, no difference in that respect, under the Gospel-Covenant.

4. Circumcision belongeth neither to no Male Children, but those born in Abraham's House, or such who were bought with his Money, &c. it did not belong to any other godly Man's Male Children that lived in his days, unless they joyned themselves to his Family; but Baptism belongs to all the Disciples of Christ, or to all true Believers in all Nations, Mat. 28. 19. 20.

5. Circumcision was to be done precisely on the Eighth Day, not before nor after. But Baptism is to be done at any time, and is not limited to any precise day.

6. Circumcision made a visible Impression on the Body, which the Party might perceive when he came to Age of Understanding. Baptism leaves no Impression on the Body.

7. Circumcision signified the taking away the sins of the Flesh, (or the Circumcision of the Heart) Baptism signifies the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Christ, which Circumcision did not.

What Parity or Parallel there is between them, I know not, unless they say that Circumcision was the *initiating Rite* under the Law, and Baptism is the *initiating Rite* under the Gospel; to which I answer, if this should be granted, yet it did not *initiate* any but Male Children; the Females were *initiated* without it, and by the same Parity of Reason, as Dr. Taylor observes, no Female Infant should be baptized, because none but Males were Circumcised.

If they say there is another Parity, viz. none were to eat the Passover, but those who were Circumcised; so none are to partake of the Lord's Supper, but such who are *first baptized* (we are all baptized into one Body,) yet I must tell them, all those who are Circumcised, had a Right to eat the Passover, and why do they not then follow the Paralell and give their Children the Lord's Supper? as indeed, the First Ancient Fathers did (in the declining State of the Church) for many Years, they gave Children the Lord's Supper, abusing that Text, in the case of Baptism, Job. 3. 5. *Unless a Man be Born again of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:* They taking Water there, to be meant of Baptismal Water, and thought Baptism, did regenerate the Children, and wash away Original Sin; and accordingly,

cordingly, they abused (and mistook) that Text, in *Job. 6. 53. Unless ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*; and from hence 'twas, they gave Infants the *Lord's Supper*, thinking (as the Papists do) that our Saviour intended the Sacrament of the Supper. I needed not have repeated these Things, and that which follows, but that Mr. *Rothwell* of *Sussex*, in his late Treatise, still insists on this Argument: you have the same in my Answer to Mr. *Burket*. To this I might add a word or two of a Reverend and Learned Person of our *Perswasion* in this Matter, 'They suppose Baptism came in, or succeeded in the place, or room of Circumcision; which may (*saieth he*) be understood many ways, as

' *First*, That those Persons may be Baptized, that were heretofore Circumcised by God's Appointment: And, in this sence, the Argument must proceed, if it conclude, to the purpose; but in this sence it is false, for Females were not Circumcised, which yet were Baptized, *Act. 8. 12, 13, 14. and chap. 16. 14, 15.* and Believers out of *Abraham's House*, as *Lot, Melchisedec, Job*, were not to be Circumcised, but believing Gentiles are universally to be Baptized.

' 2. (*Saieth he*) It may be understood, as if the Rite of Baptism then began, when the Rite of Circumcision did, or was to end; but this is not to be said neither; for *John Baptist*, and Christ's Disciples, Baptized before Circumcision, of Right, ceased, *Joh. 4. 1. 2.*

' 3. He Answers, That of Baptism, succeeding in the Place of Circumcision in Signification; which, as we have shewed in several Respects, it doth not.

But Secondly, (as I said) if there were such a Parity, or Paralell, between Circumcision and Baptism, as they intimate, yet it would not do their Business; but thus to argue, as the said learned Writer observes, may be very pernicious.

' For, (*saieth he*) indeed if this Argument be not warily, and restrainedly understood, *an Egg is laid*, out of which manifest *Judaism*, may be hatched; but if it be taken restrainedly, it no more follows thence; but Baptism and Circumcision, in some things, hold forth the same, which is more plainly said of *Noah's Ark*, *1. Pet. 3. 22.* and the *Red Sea*, and *Cloud*, *1. Cor. 10. 4.* and yet we do not say, Baptism succeeded into their Place; much less do we infer any Rite to be instituted in their Stead, respecting the same Person; yea verily, it is to be seriously thought on.

' 1. That by such Arguments, drawn from *Analogies*, not conceived by the Holy Ghost, but drawn out of our Wit; a new kind of instituting Rites, (to wit from *Analogies*;) are brought in; besides, our Lord's Precepts, and the Apostles Examples.

' 2. This being once said, by a like Parity of Reason and Arguing, it will be lawful to bring into the Church, under other Names and Forms, the whole Burthen of *Jewish Rites*; yea, almost out of what you will, to conclude what you will; for, Who shall put a Bound to Men's feigning *Analogies*, when they go beyond the Lord's Precepts, and the Apostles Ex-

'apples?' It is well known, That the Divine Appointment of Tythes to be paid, and many other Things, in the Writings of *Divines*, are asserted by this kind of Argument; besides, the Rule of Christ's Precepts, and his Apostles Examples.

3. Hereby will the Opinion of the *Papists* be confirmed, who affirm, from 1. Cor. 10. 11. the Sacraments of the *Jews*, to be *Types* of the Sacraments of *Christians*, which is rejected by *Divines*, that dispute against *Bellarmino*.

4. This manner of Arguing, will countenance the Arguments of the *Papists*, for an universal Bishop, because the *Jews* had a High-Priest, and Justice a Linnen Garment at Mass, because there was such among the *Jews*; and for Holy-Water, Purification of Women, Easter, Pentecost, and many more such Ceremonies, for which the *Papists* do, in like manner, argue, as appears out of *Durandus's Rationals*, and other Interpreters: Yea, What hinders, but we may give Children the Lord's-Supper, if we argue this way, since Samuel, Jesus Christ, under Age, were partakers of the Passover? And, of Right, all Males were thrice in the year to appear before the Lord; and therefore, it is certain they did eat the Passover, &c. Least any should take this for a light Suggestion, I will add, That grave, godly, and learned Men, have often warned, That we are to take heed, that we do not rashly frame Arguments from Analogies: Among others, in their Learned Writings, in English, John Pagis, in his Defence of Church-Government, Part 1. Chap. 3. Pag 8. and else-where. John Ball, in his Reply to The Answer of the New-England Elders Nine Positions. Posit. 2. p. 14.

Lastly, (as it be) It is to be considered, again and again, how by these Argumentations, the Consciences of Men may be freed from the Danger of Will Worship, and polluting so Remarkable an Ordinance of Christ, as Baptism is; especially this Care lies on them, who by Prayers, Sermons, Writings, Covenants, and Oaths, do deter Christians from humane Invention, in God's Worship diligently, and 'tis to be hoped Sincerely: thus far this Reverend Divine.

I now might proceed to Answer divers others Objections, as

First, Circumcision was a Type of Baptism. [2.] Infants were once in Covenant, and never cast out. [3.] Circumcision was part of the Ceremonial Law, which was Dedicated by Blood; therefore, no part of the Covenant of Works, or Old Covenant. [4.] In Circumcision God gave himself to Abraham, to be his God, and the God of his Seed. [5.] Circumcision was the Seal of the Righteousness of Faith. [6.] Circumcision was an Everlasting Covenant. [7.] There is but one Covenant of Works, and that was made with Adam. [8.] Paul Circumcised Timothy, therefore Circumcision could not, in it self, oblige to the keeping of the whole Law. [9.] The Root is Holy, therefore the Branches. [10.] The Privileges of the Gospel are restrained, and narrower then the Privileges of the Law, if Children are excluded. [11.] The denying Infant Baptism, hinders the Progress of the Christian Religion, Mr. Rothwell, p. 2.

FINIS.

The SECOND PART is in the Press.